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Ritual

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The Ritual (*Rituale Romanum*) is one of the official books of the Roman Rite ([../cathen/13155a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13155a.htm)). It contains all the services performed by a priest ([../cathen/12406a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12406a.htm)) that are not in the Missal ([../cathen/10354c.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10354c.htm)) and Breviary ([../cathen/02768b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02768b.htm)) and has also, for convenience, some that are in those books. It is the latest and still the least uniform book of our rite.

When first ritual functions were written in books, the Sacramentary in the West, the Euchologion in the East contained all the priest's ([../cathen/12406a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12406a.htm)) (and bishop's ([../cathen/02581b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02581b.htm))) part of whatever functions they performed, not only the holy Liturgy in the strict sense, but all other sacraments ([../cathen/13295a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13295a.htm)), blessings ([../cathen/02599b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02599b.htm)), sacramentals ([../cathen/13292d.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13292d.htm)), and rites of every kind as well. The contents of our Ritual and Pontifical were in the Sacramentaries. In the Eastern Churches ([../cathen/05230a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05230a.htm)) this state of things still to a great extent remains. In the West a further development led to the distinction of books, not according to the persons ([../cathen/11726a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11726a.htm)) who use them, but according to the services for which they are used. The Missal ([../cathen/10354c.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10354c.htm)), containing the whole Mass, succeeded the Sacramentary. Some early Missals added other rites, for the convenience of the priest ([../cathen/12406a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12406a.htm)) or bishop ([../cathen/02581b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02581b.htm)); but on the whole this later arrangement involved the need of other books to supply the non-Eucharistic functions of the Sacramentary. These books, when they appeared, were the predecessors of our Pontifical and Ritual. The bishop's ([../cathen/02581b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02581b.htm)) functions (ordination ([../cathen/11279a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11279a.htm)), confirmation, etc.) filled the Pontifical, the priest's ([../cathen/12406a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12406a.htm)) offices (baptism ([../cathen/02258b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02258b.htm)), penance, matrimony, extreme unction, etc.) were contained in a great variety of little handbooks, finally replaced by the Ritual.



The Pontifical emerged first. The book under this name occurs already in the eighth century (Pontifical of Egbert). From the ninth there is a multitude of Pontificals. For the priest's ([../cathen/12406a.htm](#)) functions there was no uniform book till 1614. Some of these are contained in the Pontificals; often the chief ones were added to Missals and Books of Hours. Then special books were arranged, but there was no kind of uniformity in arrangement or name. Through the Middle Ages ([../cathen/10285c.htm](#)) a vast number of handbooks for priests ([../cathen/12406a.htm](#)) having the care of souls ([../cathen/14153a.htm](#)) was written. Every local rite, almost every diocese ([../cathen/05001a.htm](#)), had such books; indeed many were compilations for the convenience of one priest ([../cathen/12406a.htm](#)) or church. Such books were called by many names—*Manuale*, *Liber agendarum*, *Agenda*, *Sacramentale*, sometimes *Rituale*. Specimens of such medieval ([../cathen/10285c.htm](#)) predecessors of the Ritual are the *Manuale Curatorum* of Roeskilde in Denmark ([../cathen/04722c.htm](#)) (first printed 1513, ed. J. Freisen, Paderborn, 1898), and the *Liber Agendarum* of Schleswig ([../cathen/13542a.htm](#)) (printed 1416, Paderborn, 1898). The Roeskilde book contains the blessing of salt and water, baptism ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)), marriage, blessing of a house, visitation of the sick with viaticum and extreme unction, prayers for the dead ([../cathen/04653a.htm](#)), funeral service, funeral of infants, prayers ([../cathen/12345b.htm](#)) for pilgrims ([../cathen/12085a.htm](#)), blessing of fire on Holy Saturday ([../cathen/07424a.htm](#)), and other blessings ([../cathen/02599b.htm](#)). The Schleswig book has besides much of the Holy Week ([../cathen/07435a.htm](#)) services, and that for All Souls, Candlemas ([../cathen/03245b.htm](#)), and Ash Wednesday ([../cathen/01775b.htm](#)). In both many rites differ from the Roman forms.

In the sixteenth century, while the other liturgical books ([../cathen/09296a.htm](#)) were being revised and issued as a uniform standard, there was naturally a desire to substitute an official book that should take the place of these varied collections. But the matter did not receive the attention of the Holy See ([../cathen/07424b.htm](#)) itself for some time. First, various books were issued at Rome ([../cathen/13164a.htm](#)) with the idea ([../cathen/07630a.htm](#)) of securing uniformity, but without official sanction. Albert Castellani in 1537 published a *Sacerdotale* of this kind; in 1579 at Venice ([../cathen/15333a.htm](#)) another version appeared, arranged by Grancesco Samarino, Canon of the Lateran; it was re-edited in 1583 by Angelo Rocca ([../cathen/13100b.htm](#)). In 1586 Giulio Antonio Santorio, Cardinal ([../cathen/03333b.htm](#)) of St. Severina, printed a handbook of rites for the use of priests ([../cathen/12406a.htm](#)), which, as Paul V ([../cathen/11581b.htm](#)) says, "he had composed after long study and with much industry and labor" (*Apostolicæ Sedis* ([../cathen/01645a.htm](#))). This book is the foundation of our Roman Ritual. In 1614 Paul V ([../cathen/11581b.htm](#)) published the first edition of the official Ritual by the Constitution "Apostolicæ Sedis" ([../cathen/01645a.htm](#)) of 17 June. In this he points out that Clement VIII ([../cathen/04027a.htm](#)) had already issued a uniform text of the Pontifical and the *Cærimoniale Episcoporum*, which determines the functions of many other ecclesiastics ([../cathen/04049b.htm](#)) besides bishops ([../cathen/02581b.htm](#)). (That is still the case. The *Cærimoniale Episcoporum* forms the indispensable complement of other liturgical books ([../cathen/09296a.htm](#)) for priests ([../cathen/12406a.htm](#)) too.) "It remained", the pope ([../cathen/12260a.htm](#)) continues, "that the sacred and authentic rites of the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)), to be observed in the administration of sacraments ([../cathen/13295a.htm](#)) and other ecclesiastical ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) functions by those who have the care of souls ([../cathen/14153a.htm](#)), should also be included in one book and published by authority of the Apostolic See ([../cathen/01640c.htm](#)); so that they should carry out their office according to a public and fixed standard, instead of following so great a multitude of Rituals".

But, unlike the other books of the Roman Rite ([../cathen/13155a.htm](#)), the Ritual has never been imposed as the only standard. Paul V ([../cathen/11581b.htm](#)) did not abolish all other collections of the same kind, nor command every one to use only his book. He says: "Wherefore we exhort in the Lord" that it should be adopted. The result of this is that the old local Rituals have never been altogether abolished. After the appearance of the Roman edition these others were gradually more and more conformed to it. They continued to be used, but had many of their prayers ([../cathen/12345b.htm](#)) and ceremonies modified to agree with the Roman book. This applies especially to the rites of baptism ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)), Holy Communion ([../cathen/07402a.htm](#)), the form of absolution ([../cathen/01061a.htm](#)), extreme unction. The ceremonies also contained in the Missal ([../cathen/10354c.htm](#)) (holy water ([../cathen/07432a.htm](#)), the processions of Candlemas ([../cathen/03245b.htm](#)) and Palm Sunday ([../cathen/11432b.htm](#)), etc.), and the prayers ([../cathen/12345b.htm](#)) also in the Breviary ([../cathen/02768b.htm](#)) (the Office for the Dead) are necessarily identical with those of Paul V's ([../cathen/11581b.htm](#)) Ritual; these have the absolute authority of the Missal ([../cathen/10354c.htm](#)) and Breviary ([../cathen/02768b.htm](#)). On the other hand, many countries have local customs for marriage, the visitation of the sick, etc., numerous special blessings ([../cathen/02599b.htm](#)), processions and sacramentals ([../cathen/13292d.htm](#)) not found in the Roman book, still printed in various diocesan ([../cathen/05001a.htm](#)) Rituals. It is then by no means the case that every priest ([../cathen/12406a.htm](#)) of the Roman Rite uses the Roman Ritual. Very many dioceses ([../cathen/05001a.htm](#)) or provinces still have their own local handbooks under the name of *Rituale* or another (*Ordo administrandi sacramenta*, etc.), though all of these conform to the Roman text in the chief elements. Most contain practically all the Roman book, and have besides local additions.

The further history of the *Rituale Romanum* is this: Benedict XIV ([../cathen/02432a.htm](#)) in 1752 revised it, together with the Pontifical and *Cærimoniale Episcoporum*. His new editions of these three books were published by the Brief ([../cathen/03052b.htm](#)) "Quam ardentem" (25 March, 1752), which quotes Paul V's ([../cathen/11581b.htm](#)) Constitution at length and is printed, as far as it concerns this book, in the beginning of the Ritual. He added to Paul V's ([../cathen/11581b.htm](#)) text two forms for giving the papal ([../cathen/12260a.htm](#)) blessing (V, 6; VIII, 31). Meanwhile a great number of additional blessings ([../cathen/02599b.htm](#)) were added in an appendix. This appendix is now nearly as long as the original book. Under the title *Benedictionale Romanum* it is often issued separately. Leo XIII ([../cathen/09169a.htm](#)) approved an *editio typica* published by Pustet ([../cathen/12583a.htm](#)) at Ratisbon ([../cathen/12657a.htm](#)) in 1884. This is now out of date. The Ritual contains several chants (for processions, burials, Office of the Dead ([../cathen/11220a.htm](#)), etc.). These should be conformable to the *Motu Proprio* of Pius X ([../cathen/12137a.htm](#)) of 22 Nov., 1903, and the Decree ([../cathen/04670a.htm](#)) of the Sacred Congregation of Rites of 8 Jan., 1904. All the Catholic ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#)) liturgical ([../cathen/09306a.htm](#)) publishers now issue editions of this kind, approved by the Congregation.

The *Rituale Romanum* is divided into ten "titles" (*tituli*); all, except the first, subdivided into chapters. In each (except I and X) the first chapter gives the general rules for the sacrament or function, the others give the exact ceremonies and prayers ([../cathen/12345b.htm](#)) for various cases of administration. *Titulus I* (*caput unicum*) is "of the things to be observed in general in the administration of sacraments ([../cathen/13295a.htm](#))"; II, About baptism ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)), chap. vi gives the rite when a bishop ([../cathen/02581b.htm](#)) baptizes, vii the blessing of the font, not on Holy Saturday ([../cathen/07424a.htm](#)) or Whitsun Eve; III, Penance and absolutions from excommunication ([../cathen/05678a.htm](#)); IV, Administration of Holy Communion

(../cathen/07402a.htm) (not during Mass); V, Extreme Unction, the seven penitential psalms, litany (../cathen/09286a.htm), visitation and care of the dying, the Apostolic blessing (../cathen/02602a.htm), commendation of a departing soul (../cathen/14153a.htm); VI, Of funerals, Office of the Dead (../cathen/11220a.htm), absolutions at the grave on later days, funerals of infants; VII, Matrimony and churching of women (../cathen/15687b.htm); VII, Blessings of holy water (../cathen/07432a.htm), candles, houses (on Holy Saturday (../cathen/07424a.htm)), and many others; then blessings (../cathen/02599b.htm) reserved to bishops (../cathen/02581b.htm) and priests (../cathen/12406a.htm) who have special faculties, such as those of vestments, *ciboriums*, statues (../cathen/13641b.htm), foundation stones, a new church (not, of course, the consecration (../cathen/04276a.htm), which is in the Pontifical), cemeteries, etc.; IX, Processions, for Candlemas (../cathen/03245b.htm), Palm Sunday (../cathen/11432b.htm), Rogation Days, Corpus Christi (../cathen/04390b.htm), etc.; X, Exorcism (../cathen/05709a.htm) and forms for filling up parochial (../cathen/11499b.htm) books (of baptism (../cathen/02258b.htm), confirmation, marriage, *status animarum*, the dead). The blessings (../cathen/02599b.htm) of tit. VIII are the old ones of the Ritual. The appendix that follows tit. X contains additional forms for blessing baptism (../cathen/02258b.htm) water, for confirmation as administered by a missionary priest (../cathen/12406a.htm), decrees about Holy Communion (../cathen/07402a.htm) and the "Forty Hours" devotion, the litanies (../cathen/09286a.htm) of Loreto and the Holy Name. Then follow a long series of blessings (../cathen/02599b.htm), not reserved; reserved to bishops (../cathen/02581b.htm) and priests (../cathen/12406a.htm) they delegate, reserved to certain religious (../cathen/12748b.htm) orders; then more blessings (../cathen/02599b.htm) (novissim) and a second appendix containing yet another collection. These appendixes grow continually. As soon as the Sacred Congregation of Rites approves a new blessing it is added to the next edition of the Ritual.

The Milanese Rite (../cathen/01394a.htm) has its own ritual (*Rituale Ambrosianum*, published by Giacomo Agnelli at the Archiepiscopal Press, Milan (../cathen/10298a.htm)). In the Byzantine Rite the contents of our ritual are contained in the *Euchologion*. The Armenians (../cathen/01736b.htm) have a ritual (*Mashdotz*) like ours. Other schismatical (../cathen/13529a.htm) Churches have not yet arranged the various parts of this book in one collection. But nearly all the Eastern Catholics (../cathen/03449a.htm) now have Rituals formed on the Roman model (see LITURGICAL BOOKS (../cathen/09296a.htm), IV).

Sources

BARUFFALDI, *Ad rituale romanum commentaria* (Venice, 1731); CATALANI, *Rituale romanum . . . perpetuis commentariis exornatum* (Rome, 1757); ZACCARIA, *Bibliotheca Ritualis* (Rome, 1776); THALHOFER, *Handbuch der kath. Liturgik*, II (Freiburg, 1893), 509-36.

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